DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 615 RC 020 477

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TITLE Challenges and Solutions for Educating Migrant Students.
PUB DATE [96]
NOTE 19p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Discrimination; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; Health Needs; *High Risk Students; Hispanic Americans; Limited English Speaking; Migrant Children; *Migrant Education; Migrant Programs; Migrant Workers; *School Role; Self Esteem; Spanish Speaking; Student Mobility; *Student Needs; *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS Michigan

ABSTRACT

This paper overviews challenges and solutions for educating migrant students in Michigan. The majority of migrant workers in the United States are Hispanic men with families. Data indicate that only about a fifth of migrant children complete education beyond the sixth grade. Migrant students tend to fall behind in their education because they change schools frequently and miss classes in order to work and help support their families. On the average, migrant students are 3-4 years behind nonmigrant students academically. Six major challenges of migrant education are interrupted schooling, limited English-language proficiency, poor health and nutrition, social isolation, economic marginality, and lack of self-esteem. Solutions for addressing these challenges include teachers and schools: (1) being prepared to meet the educational needs of migrant students, adjusting school calendars to accommodate migrant students, and keeping an academic portfolio on each student; (2) supporting bilingualism by teaching migrant students how to read and write English while encouraging them to maintain their native language; (3) ensuring that migrant students receive needed immunizations and other health-related services; (4) increasing social skills of migrant students by exposing them to different environments such as museums, theaters, supermarkets, science fairs, and community activities; (5) creating programs that address the clothing, food, and shelter needs of migrant families and linking migrant families with appropriate social services agencies; and (6) increasing migrant students' self-esteem by praising accomplishments and identifying student strengths. (LP)

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Challenges and Solutions for Educating Migrant Students

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Preamble - Views on Consulting

It is frustrating for me to write about this topic because it is emotionally charged. As a state consultant, I have had to travel around the state school systems to monitor and provide technical assistance to the 55 plus migrant education programs. During all these years I have observed the classrooms, talked to teachers, administrators, parents, farmworkers, health and social service providers. This experience has provided me with certain data that is of great importance. I can only speak as a member of a Hispanic group and from this perspective I may sound hurt and offended by the expressions I use to report what I have seen. While some may hold my credentials questionable, I can only affirm that they should try going to another country and work on a Ph.D. in another language that is not their native tongue. I guess I have been one of the lucky ones that got out of the barrio and made it regardless of the gangs, drugs, violence, and limited economic family conditions. As a consultant, I have made an effort to continue reading and educating myself. Unless an education consultant reads the latest research, teaches at a school, and works on problem solving in the area of expertise, write research papers, and actively participate as an advocate for the migrant children, he or she are prone to vegetate in this field. Sorry to be insulting to some who fit the description but this is a plain and simple fact. Just by looking at the students fail in the classroom, walking the school hallways, talking with frustrated teachers, parents and administrators, and having lunch and dinner with politicians does not qualify any person for recommending any significant changes in curriculum or educational approaches?. Just because a person is of Hispanic heritage, looks Hispanic or speaks Spanish doesn't mean that he or she has a license to say what is right or wrong for all Hispanic children in their school district or state?. I personally would not even attempt to recommend anything unless I study each situation thoroughly. I do not use my ethnicity as a flag or diploma to make me capable of providing expert advise. It takes more than being Hispanic

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or having a Spanish surname. It takes hard work and constant learning to effectively do such activities.
Enough of setting the record straight. The purpose of this paper is to point to challenges and solutions for educating migrant students for the next five(5) years. Let's start by defining the term migrant student.

Introduction

Migrant workers are a group of people that contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy and don't necessary get the best of treatments for their families. Every year this nation has about 840,000 migrant farmworkers who have 409,000 children traveling with them from one crop to another trying to make a living. Schooling for them is pre-literate. Children of migrant workers are exposed to chemicals, social neglect, disrupted schooling, racism and deplorable living conditions that would make our poor people look like aristocrats.
But just exactly who are these migrant families? The 1993 National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS) done by the U.S. Department of Labor, revealed that the migrant farmworkers were:
.Primary Hispanics (94 percent),
.born in Mexico (80 percent),
.married with children (52 percent),
.doing farmwork in the U.S. without their families (59 percent),
.mostly men (82 percent)
. are today, or were until 1987-88, unauthorized workers (67 percent).
Many times these families are called by different names such as Aliens, Illegals, Immigrants, Mexicans, Chicanos, Trouble makers and others. All these erroneous labels must be stopped. We may start by educating our community about the positive side of having migrant families come to our country every year. Our school systems are the vehicle to provide such education. We must also be very grateful to them for the sacrifice they make every year. One of the best ways to say thank you to these hard working families is to contribute to their children's education so that they can brake the chains of depending on temporary and seasonal work. We can help these families realize that by means of education, their children can have a better future. Our community must be very grateful that there are still some people willing to work for very low wages and hard labor conditions so that we can have our fruits and vegetables in our tables.

Migrants usually harvest fruits and vegetables that must be picked as soon as they ripen. After migrants finish the work in one area, they seek jobs elsewhere. Few of these workers settle permanently in any community. Most of the migrants in the USA are Americans Indians, Mexican Americans, African Americans, or Puerto Ricans. Of these, Hispanics compose 90% percent of a migrant farm workers in America. Temporary farm workers generally receive low wages and often cannot find work in one place long enough to qualify for such government aid as food stamps, public assistance and disability insurance. Shotland (1989) reports that there is risk of injury from farm machinery and equipment, poor sanitation, chronic and acute exposure to toxic pesticides, and harsh and dangerous physical work. In fact, farm labor is reported as more dangerous than mining. Many migrant families live in run down, unsanitary housing. They often lack adequate food or medical care, and many suffer malnutrition or other health problems. Bartlett 1992, reports that undocumented workers are often afraid to apply for benefits, even when they are eligible.

Many migrant workers have difficulty finding other kinds of work because they lack education and good command of the English language. Only about a fifth of the migrant children go beyond sixth grade. Migrant youngsters tend to fall behind in their education because they change schools frequently. Some miss classes because they work to help support their family. Many Michigan schools sponsor summer sessions and other programs to promote the education of migrant children who temporarily live in the area. This is basically were the Migrant Education becomes an important contribution to the migrant family.

About this Paper

This paper will mention several solutions to each of the challenges presented. These are not the only solutions, and they will only focus on the immediate need for migrant student services. I will also provide ideas on what can be done by each state to assure that the migrant program is comprehensive in nature.

It is up to us migrant educators to start meeting these challenges. It is also up to us to provide leadership with out fear of retaliation. You have the data, you know where

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to get more, you can speak Spanish or English. So, what is the excuse? I will give you my perspective but at the same time understanding that each of us have a different way of accomplishing any given task.

Does Speed Correlate to Knowledge?

Modern education places value on speed. We ask of our students to learn things, and also to learn them fast. Those that take a little longer because of language barriers are penalized not because they don't know the material but because they do not comprehend it and need extra time. What makes it even worse is that the translators we have for them may not know enough Spanish or English to really provide the students with effective instruction! We need to get off the speed kick and concentrate on teaching our kids the basic material they are suppose to learn. Learning is suppose to be fun, not punishment. We are suppose to give them interesting and challenging examples. A valuable class should not be taught out of a book. The teacher should not be a moderator. The teacher should be the person providing guidance and excitement to instruction. Teachers should be helping the students identify the resources to answer the questions for the objectives to be accomplished for the class.

Do you really think that learning of any subject can happen with just half an hour a week? Not very likely. You need to gather all school personnel and set the rules straight. You, as the advocate, have to tell them all the information you have on each of your migrant students so that teachers know what they are going to be faced with. This way they can prepare goals and objectives ahead of time and teach our migrant students effectively.

The Migrant Student

These are students that because of the high mobility during the school year, lose educational continuity and lag behind in their academics. As educators we must not pity or have low expectations for migrant children or any Hispanic child. What I am saying is " We have to intensify our work and provide them with more quality, non-boring, useful supplemental instruction. More supplemental instruction should be understood as "in addition to the regular school day instruction".

Migrant students are 3 years behind on average academically. Some can't speak, read or write English as well as their mainstream counterparts. Now, what would happen to you if I

all of a sudden place you in a classroom in China and say "You should learn the Chinese language and compete with the students that are local. Plus, I will give three years to do this. You would say. "I don't know the language because nobody has taught me". Well then, why do we expect the migrant kids to know something we have not taught them? In addition to all of this, school districts provide tutors with dubious credentials in order to give the appearance of target services for these students. That has only helped create a great employment avenue for those local semi-educated Spanish speakers and as a result we are penalizing our migrant students with cheap instruction! This type of migrant education program does not work, and will not work any more. The system is rigged agains migrant students. Many adminstrators don't know Spanish and don't have the means for testing language efficiency or correctness of any of the tutors and or teachers. They may simply rely on what other semi-Spanish speaking person may tell them. You must start asking for transcripts and also have some tools for measuring teacher Spanish language proficiency. Just because your mainstream teacher took Spanish in high school, does not enable him or her to teach kinds in Spanish.

Migrant children that are Hispanic are at least a year behind in their schooling even before they enter the first grade. They are lacking the pre-academic skill sets. According to the National Center for Education Statistics report " The Educational Progress of Hispanic Students (1995), Hispanic students on the average have lower achievement scores and are less ready for school that their European or African American counterparts. You may also add interrupted schooling as a significant negative factor affecting migrant student achievement. This in fact puts our migrant students between three (3) and four (4) years behind their mainstream counterparts.

Nine (9) out of ten (10) of Michigan migrant students are in grades levels k - 8 and experience a myriad of other problems. Elementary schooling brings up other interesting factors. First, these students need extra help with social, health and basic support services. Second, these students are trying to adapt to a different environment that is conflicting from their culture. Third, proper nutrition and care is essential for setting the correct stage for learning. These patterns are a representative sample of the national migracy conditions.

Over the years as a migrant education consultant, I have been able to identify six (6) major challenges. The following treats the challenges of migrant student education.

1. Interrupted Schooling,
2. Limited English Language Proficiency,
3. Lack of Health and Nutrition,
4. Social Isolation,
5. Economic Marginality, and
6. Lack of Self Esteem

Interrupted Schooling

Migrant farm workers move on an average of six (6) times per year in order to complete the different variety of farm harvesting. This movement from one state to another or from one city from another within a state creates a tremendous educational hazard for their children. Migrant children will arrive to a new school, tested on all subjects, and placed in a room with new students in the middle of the school year. In addition, many migrant students are placed in a lower grade level because the school standards and absenteesm policies are different from the school they just came from. Many times curriculum incompatibility and staff shortage creates a compounding negative effect. Migrant students are often placed in a room with a teacher aide or simply left alone in the school hallways. Interrupted schooling and lack of continuity in curriculum from that interruption of studies are additional conditions that raise the dropout rate for migrant students. These conditions often hinder and decrease the accumulation of credits they need to pass from one grade to another. Many students decide not to go to school because they want to work and help their parents. They also get better positive reinforcement if they stay home and help take care of their little brothers and sisters. High school students have very little incentive and self motivation. Migrant teenagers will rather drop out and work than study all day long. College degrees are seen as high expense activities far from reality. Many students are discouraged by their families because they will not have the resources to support a college degree tuition. Many times they marry at early age and continue the migrant cycle.

The lack of interstate curriculum between states also affects the migrant child academic progress. Many states are less aggressive when it comes time to recommend science and math requirements because they have very low expectations about the migrant child.

Interrupted Schooling - Solutions

Since this is a multiple phased problem, it is a complex issue which presents a real challenge for those of you who are creative thinkers and problem solver's. As a first step, plan ahead of time base your predictions for need according to the past three years. Look for patterns of school population. If you know that for the past three years you have had 40% of monolingual migrant students, please have a teacher ready before they arrive to your school. Look at your certificates of eligibility and analyze the percent of elementary, middle and high school students. Have a list of all schools where your students come from or are going to. You have a very good chance of getting them back in your school next year.

Migrant programs must provide instruction in the migrant camps. They must create a charter school or academy that will fit the migrant stream calendar. Teachers must expose the migrant students to the latest computer technology. Many lessons and books are available via the internet. Teachers must start teaching these skills regardless of their school economic conditions. You must not wait for the turtles to start moving. If your regular school system is out of sync, provide new out reach programs that can meet the needs of these students. You must not try to fit the students to a school calendar that is disfuctional to their way of living and learning. Schools must accomodate learning to fit the student need.

As far as educational materials and books, have them ready for distribution before the students arrive. Set aside some sets of materials so that you don't have to spend time looking for materials. You may also ask the migrant workers to call your school ahead of time from Texas, Florida and Mexico. You may ask your recruiter to give them a phone where they can reach you at all times. This alone will help you save valuable time. Keep an academic portfolio on each migrant student, including copies of their academic records on math, English and Oral Language. This will help you have it ready for distribution to other schools that request this information. Even if they don't request it, you may take the initiative to call the schools and ask them if they need the information. Use the data entry systems available to your school. You must also use the quickest means for transferring student information. i.e. fax, e-mail, regular mail, FedEx, and others.

You are encouraged to be creative and to have a planning session with all local staff and service providers. Write

and distribute priorities for the term. Provide a list of list people responsible for each priority to be accomplished. Make sure you include the address, fax, e-mail and phone number.

Limited English Language Proficiency

The first language of 75% of the migrant children is not English. Among these, many are foreign-born and have little or no schooling in their native countries. Reading and oral language is sometimes very difficult to ascertain because of the living conditions and limited resources.

Many students are kept from learning English because they may not have the resources to purchase them or may not have the time and transportation to borrow from the local libraries. More than 50% of the migrant parents may not be used to reading in from
of their children because they have to work all day or because they don't have the skills. This will also cause a lack of interest on behalf of the child towards reading. School tutors may be a turn off because in some schools they just baby-sit and have
students work on Xeroxed handouts or coloring pictures. It is less expensive for local programs to hire teacher aides and assistants than to have a certified teacher helping them catch up with their skills.

Pull out programs that help students once a week in the school hallway for a few hours are also detrimental for the acquisition of English. Students feel ashamed to be seen in the hallways with another person. Other students and teachers may assume that the student is a problem or is in special education.

To compound the problem even more, Bilingual Education is now optional! Bilingual Education has been voted down by the unsensitive majority, the majority does not have any idea of what it is to go to another country to learn a new language. This was a totally biased procedure. Give me a group of non minority voters and I will give you a non-bilingual education vote. This new decision will not only create a greater expense to the school but it will also create a vacuum of teachers, materials and extra help needed to teach English as a second language. Monolingual students in great need for succeeding will directly suffer the consequences.

What are the consequences? Drop out for sure! Increasing gang and other violent groups. Who wants to be at a school where people look at you as a burden, as an alien and where

people don't speak your native tongue? Would you be a student in such a school where you don't feel welcome?
We will all have this challenge to deal with in the near future.

Limited English Proficiency - Solutions

Creativity and hard work are the only two immediate solutions that I see as important solutions for this challenge. We have to start a new school wide comprehensive program which will focus in the student needs, not on the local union needs. Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time there was a group called the teachers union which had control of all the school administrators and local boards of education. They had all they wanted, when and where they wanted. One day they came to school and discovered that all the students were absent. The students had moved to another school where they felt welcomed and where they had teachers that really considered them first priority. The new teachers wanted all the students to succeed.
This story will become reality if we don't start making some radical changes in our school system. There is no point in discussing that local students are not doing as well as we want them too. We all know that most of our minority students are poor and go to schools that have limited resources. These schools may also have high level of absenteeism which in fact will eventually result in high drop out rates.
It has been said by recent research that black and Hispanic students do not perform as well as white students in general. What is not said is why is this pattern occurring in our schools. You may notice that high income communities correlate to good schools and high performance on the SAT scores. It also correlates to most of the white student population.
Now, lets see what happens with Hispanics.
Hispanics are reported as lower achievers than white students according to the latest SAT reports. The National Center for Education Statistics says "As early as age 9, differences can be seen in academic performance of Hispanic and white students. Academic proficiency in reading, mathematics, and science, as measured at age 9 by the National Assessment of educational Progress (NAEP), is lower for Hispanic children than for white children. Although scores for Hispanic 9-year olds have increased in mathematics and science over the past 15-20 years, there has been little change in the gap between

the scores of white and Hispanic 9-year-olds over this time period".
If we add the lack of English language attainment for this group we can conclude that it is a critical compounding effect. Not knowing English will widen the gap even more. Most migrant children come from a Spanish speaking environment. We have plenty of students from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and other latin American countries where Spanish is the native tongue. In addition, many of the families don't know how to work with the system. They may not have the language skills to request the benefits which they may qualify for according to law. Many parents don't frequent parent meetings because they have very limited communication skills or feel that they wont make a difference if they complain. Some have even feared that if they complain, the teachers and the system will retaliate by suspending their children. Lack of bilingual support is a turn off for most of the students. They will quickly start skipping school and dropping out because they feel that schools do not want them there and that they are outsiders. Many students are called "Alien", "Illegals", and other non pretty names.
We must quit practicing these racist activities and start teaching migrant student how to read and write English. If they only speak Spanish, we must quickly assign a bilingual teacher to use the students native language and help them make the transfer. This should not be done by promoting assimilation. It should be done by praising the student for knowing another language and making him or her feel proud of the fact that they do know how to read and write in another language. "We should not promote UNLEARNING SPANISH". Our schools should promote more learning and not un-learning.

Lack of Health and Nutrition

Migrants and their families have severely poorer physical health compared to the general population. The infant mortality rate among migrants is 125% percent higher than the general population, and their life expectancy of migrant farm workers is 49 years in contrast to the nation's average of 75 years (National Migrant Resources Program, 1990).
Commonly reported health problems among the migrant farm workers and their children include: lower height, weight, and other anthropometric attainments; respiratory disease; parasitic conditions; skin infections; chronic diarrhea; vitamin A deficiency; and undiagnosed congenital and developmental problems. In addition, accidental injuries,

heat related illness, and chemical poisoning are highly prevalent among the population
(American Academy of Pediatrics, 1989; Shotland, 1989; Koch, 1988;
National Rural Health Care Association, 1986).

Lack of Health and Nutrition - Solutions

As part of the solutions we should make it a top priority to update all proper vaccinations for all migrant children and families that arrive to our school. We have come a long way with this activity but we still have plenty to do. Your school is responsible for each of the children that are part of your school community. You must be flexible with the schedules provided for vaccinations. You must also take these basic services to the camp, during and after work hours. Some schools opt for taking the children in school transportation or using the local migrant recruiters to assist with this responsibility. Parents should know that it is crucial to update their children's vaccinations.

Access becomes a great concern to all of us in migrant education. Many hospitals love to refer all migrant families to local migrant clinics. Migrant families must not be denied basic services. School officials must get involved in making sure that these discrimination practices come to an end. Most of the excuses used are that there are no doctors available, the schedule for the next appointment may be three weeks from the day of the visit and that they ran out of vaccines. Let me tell you that these excuses are not and should not be acceptable. Migrant education staff must identify these hospitals and health providers. They must report them to the proper authorities so that the next time they apply for federal funding or state funding for special populations, they are denied such moneys. Most hospitals have the option to set payment plans and special Medicaid services for poor families. Migrant directors and principals must meet directly with the service providers to supply a list of all the migrant families in the area so that they receive top priority. Remember that these families come for a short period of time and that they don't have time to waste waiting for a doctor. They may also opt for not going to the hospital because they fear that the hospital may report them to immigration officials if they don't have the proper identification.

We have a great challenge ahead with this issue. Migrant families are exposed to many chemicals during their moves from one state to another. These contaminated environments

may bring future illness to family members and also complications for migrant student learning.
Be sure to have good and complete health records on each family member. This will help you update health records when they return every year. Teachers and staff must be aware of any immediate illness a child may have. Migrant and general school staff must have a plan of action as it relates to migrant health issues. These plans should be coordinated with local health providers.

Social Isolation

The isolation of the migrants from the rest of the community where they are living is hard to imagine until it has been experienced. Camps are located in rural areas near the fields in low income urban areas. It is possible to drive through farm land where literally hundreds of thousands of migrants are living and working, and yet be unaware of their existence.
Migrants are socially invisible. Ethnic groups are often kept separate in camps. They rarely interact with each other, thus re-enforcing the isolation. Local people try to keep migrants at a distance. In addition to being strangers, migrant children are often culturally different; local children ignore or pick on them.(Diaz, et. all.,1989) Migrant families try not to use the existing local systems to get help. They will try to get help an support within the migrant camp population and friends before they ask or apply for any health, social or educational benefits. If they are from another country and do not have proper documentation, the will not ask for any help and try to live isolated from the outside world.

Cultural responsiveness to the educational setting is totally paternalistic. The migrant parent will rarely question the teacher or school systems about any situation that may happen to their child. They will take as correct and unquestionable the will and demands of the school towards their children. Most parents may feel intimidated about their presence in school meetings. They will also will be discouraged if the teachers does not speak their
native language.

Social Isolation - Solutions

It is a given fact that the institution for socialization and migrant student interaction is the school. A number of factors (e.g. language, transportation, access to different services and buildings) influence migrants' involvement with

the school and all community institutions. We must teach all migrant students at an early age that it is important to learn English in order to know the system and work within the system. It will be to their advantage to know two languages. It will also help them interact with the rest of the children.

Schools must make an effort to schedule educational trips to museums, theaters, supermarkets, science fairs, universities, festivals, and other community activities so that they learn how to behave within the different environments and learn from the visits. All activities must have goals and objectives directed at instruction.

Mainstream students from your school system must know the migrant population and the importance of having these children in our nation.

You as the migrant educator are responsible for teaching all administrators and local boards of education that the migrant children are an asset and not a liability. You must set the record straight and provide all this information before they reach your school.

The best place to start is by talking at parent meetings, teacher conference rooms, cafeterias and informal staff gatherings.

Another group that is very important for this challenge are Bilingual teachers. They are the ones responsible for planning all the activities and materials to be used in order to encourage all groups of children to understand all cultures and respect them for what they are. You must teach that being different is not being bad. Being different is a natural setting which we must comprehend at an early age if we want to succeed in the future. Be creative with the activities and places you select for educational trips. Always remember that they must have an educational purpose and you are to lead the way.

Economic Marginality

Income studies (Shotland, 1989) show that in 1986 the average annual income for migrant farm workers was remarkably low-less than $6500 . Work for the migrant family is usually seasonal and inconsistent. Most workers are not covered by employee benefit programs. In addition to residency problems, language barriers, and lack of contact with community services, most migrant families receive few social, economic, or health

benefits. Though very poor, migrant families benefit little from available human services programs. Parents who are barely surviving economically find that their children's school attendance is a hardship. Children could improve the family's income by working in the fields if they did not have to go to school. This is a fact that drives the migrant family and it is more present in children that are in the junior high and high school grade levels.

Economic Marginality - Solutions

Migrant and seasonal farm workers continue to face many of the same problems in agriculture that they experienced a decade ago: uncertain demand for jobs, problems in finding housing and accommodations for families with children, uncertain incomes and related poverty.(Rochin,1994)

Many migrant families come from Texas, Florida and Mexico to Michigan with a promise of work which sometimes result in high loss of income. Many come to find out that there is no work at the camp and that their deposit for housing cannot be refunded to them. Many families give the growers up to three months rent in advance even though sometimes they may stay only several weeks. We can help them with this problem by getting involved with the camp owners and making sure that they know that you care!

Accommodations and great housing are not what we all assume. Heat, noise, over populated housing, smell, dust, lack of toilets and running water are just a few of the variables that may affect learning. Many migrant children find it very difficult, uncertain and stressful to study and concentrate while their home temperature is close to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Or maybe the people are noisy around the neighborhood with radios and TV sets blasting the speakers. Many children have to take care of the family siblings while their parents work in the fields. Work is the first priority among the majority of the migrant families. That is the basic reason why they move and that should be understood by all of us. These are some of the reasons why you as a teacher or advocate should make an effort to visit the camps and the migrant families constantly.

If you have the migrant families economic condition in mind, you will not make erroneous assumptions. Clothing, food and shelter are essential elements for any family to succeed. By creating a program to supply these needs, you may be well advanced in solving some of the major problems that affect migrant student learning.

Farm worker earnings have not improved in terms of purchasing power. In general, farm workers with fewer than 150 days of annual employment at wages of $6.52 per hour on the average, live in poverty. They may need social services, health services, and welfare to support their families. Your efforts for referral and networking with local service providers is essential for this challenge.

Lack of Self Esteem

Because of the instability and continuous change of school environments, the migrant child faces a very disruptive schooling. Friends and teachers have to be left behind just when they are starting to develop confidence and security. Many of these children have to leave their parents and extended family behind so that they can follow their parents. Their living conditions and house commodities have to be very simple and practical. Most of the
time even toys and dolls have to be left behind because there is no space in the truck or it would take space from some of the brothers and sisters. They also have to deal with the fact of over age for the school grade.

Many migrant students are older and more physically developed than their peers. The are constantly teased by the other children. They may also feel out of place because smaller children may already master the material and subjects covered by the teacher, while they struggle with learning English and other subjects at a lower pace. This factor creates a non friendly and insecure environment for learning. It also becomes a great challenge for
all school staff to tackle at the beginning of the school year and during all
summer.

Many times the migrant child is placed in a special education class because he or she does not master the language and because the student has problems catching up with all the material to be covered in the school curriculum. More often children are measure by the speed of completion than the mastery of the subject. They may take longer to master a subject but it should not be confused with having a mental handicap. They are victims of the environment and interrupted schooling. This condition is a strong factor for not having the necessary tools to master the material for the grade they are placed. The worse case is when they are labeled speech impaired because they cannot speak, read or write English as well as their counterparts. Or because the

school does not have enough money to cover the costs for an extra teacher.

Lack of Self Esteem - Solutions

For the students lack of self esteem I may point out that our migrant children need continuous praising from all teachers, parents, family, staff and the entire community. We must praise all the positive accomplishments and provide them with additional steps and educational tools. We have to make sure that they realize that they too can make it. If they try hard and study every day, the results will be positive. We should not turn the migrant children off by lowering the standards, expectations and by pointing out all the mistakes and wrong doings in front of the entire class. Teachers should identify their students capabilities, skills, potentials, hobbies and other activities that they do good so that other students focus on these accomplishments. You should help other students and staff accept and understand migrant students.

There are many other techniques to be used in the classroom to increase self esteem. Talk with your school counselor to get other materials or ideas for this particular challenge. We already know that students are from economically disadvantaged environments and that being poor bring many characteristics and conditions for students to be categorized as "at risk". Before we start placing labels on our migrant students, Lets try to identify their strengths and make them feel at home. Lets have an interpreter at all times that can serve and help bridge the gap between the school principal and the parents. Please understand that migrant children have a hard life on a daily basis because of their high mobility, interrupted schooling, economic condition, ethnicity and migrant lifestyle.

Conclusions

You have been exposed to just a few of the solutions for the challenges presented. The purpose is to provide you with some easy alternatives for immediate action. Migrant Education is here to stay and it must change with the new century. School wide programs must include migrant education and ways to fulfill migrant student immediate needs. Priority should be given to the mobile students at all times. They are the ones with the compounding effect of mobility, economics and health service limitations. The challenge is

yours and there is no limit for the solutions. It is up to us to provide immediate positive action.

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